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New media has big impact on tourism businesses

Workshop examines ways to utilize social media and emerging technology

INDIANAPOLIS –The Indiana Office of Tourism Development is bringing together experts at its 2010 New Media Workshop to examine how emerging technology can help tourism businesses more effectively connect with consumers and generate visitor spending. The day-long event is November 17 at the Indiana State Museum.

“Travel demand is expected to increase in 2011 and that is good news for Indiana,” said Lt. Governor Becky Skillman. “Now more than ever, it is important to embrace innovative ways to maximize the tourism industry’s already-significant impact on the Hoosier economy.”

A proactive social media strategy has helped the Indiana Office of Tourism Development support partners and increase awareness of travel opportunities. Discounted hotel rooms made available last summer through an integrated Facebook and email campaign provided significant savings to consumers and generated revenue for the Indiana Hotel and Lodging Association. Dynamic content found on the Indiana Insider blog is contributing to record-breaking numbers at VisitIndiana.com, Indiana’s official travel planning source.

Other tourism businesses have had similar success. Scotty’s Brewhouse uses social media to improve customer service, offer coupons and cut marketing costs. The Columbus Visitors Center is using national bloggers to showcase the Miller House and Garden. Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari launched a mobile phone application in July to enhance its visitor experience. The park is also an industry leader in developing brand advocates through online networks.

Attendees to the New Media Workshop will learn more about mobile technology, receive tips on social media platforms and hear real-world, best practice examples. Speakers include the Indiana Insider bloggers, Troy Burk (Right On Interactive), James Burnes (Mobiltopia), Andy Klotz (Indiana State Fair), Meg Liffick (Indianapolis Museum of Art) and Scott Wise (Scotty’s Brewhouse).

Indiana welcomes more than 62 million visitors each year, generating more than \$10 billion in visitor spending statewide.

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Lt. Governor Becky Skillman oversees the Indiana Office of Tourism Development. Amy Vaughan serves as the agency’s Director.